

***The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended)
and the
Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)***

**Screening Statement for the draft
Deerhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan**

In accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (The 2004 Regulations) as amended by The Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 and The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Amendment) Regulations 2020, this document is the screening determination of the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Deerhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan. It also covers the need for Habitats Regulations screening, in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017), as amended.

Under the regulations, a SEA must be undertaken for land-use and spatial plans where there is a likelihood that they will have “significant environmental effects”. A Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is a development plan document that is required to be screened to see if it requires a SEA.

Regulation 9 requires the ‘responsible authority’ (i.e. the authority by which or on whose behalf the NDP is prepared) to determine whether or not a plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This is determined by a screening process, which should use a specified set of criteria (set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations). The results of this process must be summarised in an SEA screening statement, which must be made publicly available.

The government’s planning portal advises that the local planning authority should put in place a process to provide a screening opinion to the qualifying body on whether the proposed NDP will require a SEA. The qualifying body should work with the local planning authority to be sure that the authority has the information it needs in order to provide a screening opinion.

The determination has been made that the Deerhurst Neighbourhood Plan falls within the scope of the 2004 Regulations on the basis that:

- **The NDP is a plan and programme as defined in Regulation 2;**
- **The NDP is prepared for town and country planning or land use as defined in Regulation 5;**
- **The NDP will determine the use of a relatively small area at a local level but, depending upon its content, may have the potential to have significant environmental effects. This screening opinion considers that likelihood.**

The assessment below has been prepared on the basis of information provided by the qualifying body, the consultation bodies and related local bodies.

The screening process set out in Regulation 9 and Schedule 1 of the 2004 Regulations includes two sets of characteristics for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment. These relate firstly to the characteristics of the NDP and secondly to the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected. There are a number of criteria relating to each of these characteristics, the responses to which are set out below.

Table 1: Assessment of Significance of Effects

Criteria (Schedule 1)	Likely significance of environmental effect	Assessment and Justification
1. The characteristics of the plans and programmes, having regard in particular to;		
(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	Yes, but unlikely to have significant effects on the environment	The Neighbourhood Development plan (NDP) will provide part of the local policy framework for the parish of Deerhurst. No sites are proposed to be allocated in the plan for housing or business.
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	Yes, but unlikely to have significant effects on the environment	The Deerhurst NDP has been prepared, taking into account, the National Planning Policy Framework, the adopted Tewkesbury Borough Plan – 2011-2031 and the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Gloucester City, Cheltenham Borough and Tewkesbury Borough (the currently adopted development plan). The Parish Council's view is that it does not conflict with any of the provisions of these documents. Whilst the Neighbourhood Development Plan must generally conform to current development plans prepared by principal planning authorities, it could in turn inform preparation of the emerging Gloucester City, Cheltenham Borough and Tewkesbury Borough Strategic & Local Plan (SLP) and any supplementary planning documents, development briefs or site specific guidance notes covering the Deerhurst Parish area.
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	Yes, but unlikely to have significant effects on the environment	The Deerhurst NDP has been drawn up with the objective of achieving sustainable development in the parish.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme and;	Yes, but unlikely to have significant effects on the environment	The Deerhurst NDP will address some environmental, economic and social issues in the Deerhurst Parish area. Within the area are: a SSSI; listed buildings and areas of orchards and woodland. These assets are already largely protected by existing Tewkesbury Borough Plan and Joint Core Strategy policies and the plan seeks to support this.
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community	Yes, but unlikely to have	The Deerhurst NDP is prepared on the basis of community legislation in the

legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	significant effects on the environment	Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, as amended.
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular to;		
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects	Significant effects on the environment are unlikely	The Deerhurst NDP sets the local vision, objectives and policies to help guide new development in the Deerhurst parish area. These need to be in line with strategic policies in the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy and the district level, Tewkesbury Borough Plan. Based on the information provided it is considered unlikely that the NDP, as currently framed, will have significant environmental effects.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects	Significant effects on the environment are unlikely	It is considered unlikely that there will be any local cumulative effects arising from the different policies proposed in the Deerhurst NDP.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects	Significant effects on the environment are unlikely	Adjoining parishes contain Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). However, it is considered that transboundary effects arising from the NDP are unlikely due to the content of the plan.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	Significant effects on the environment are unlikely	The Deerhurst NDP does not include any housing allocations. It is considered that there are unlikely to be significant environmental risks to human health or the environment, as a consequence of the Deerhurst NDP.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Significant effects on the environment are unlikely	The Deerhurst NDP will guide new developments in the designated Neighbourhood Area only, and is therefore, unlikely to affect an extensive population.
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to; i. special natural characteristics or cultural heritage ii. exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values or iii. intensive land use	Whilst there are some of these within or proximate to the area, significant effects on the environment are unlikely.	The NDP covers the Deerhurst Parish area where there are a number of important interests of acknowledged importance: the Coombe Hill Canal SSSI, historic assets and listed buildings (including the Grade 1 Listed Odda's Chapel). The NDP is unlikely to generate environmental effects on those designations due to the plan not allocating sites or including policies that would be contrary to the purposes of designating these sites.

(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	Whilst there are some within or proximate to the designated Neighbourhood Area, significant effects on these aspects are unlikely as no sites are being allocated.	There is a Special Area of Conservation (Dixton Wood SAC) located 8.6 km to the east of the Parish and Bredon Hill SAC, located 14.5 km to the north of Deerhurst Parish. However, the NDP is unlikely to generate environmental effects upon these internationally protected sites. It is considered that the NDP as proposed, is unlikely to generate environmental effects on these designations, due to their relative distance away from the NDP area and the plan not allocating sites or including policies that would be contrary to the purposes of designation of these sites.

Consultation

Regulation 9 requires the responsible authority to consult the 'consultation bodies' (these are Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency). This was undertaken by email on 23 June 2025 by Tewkesbury Borough Council on behalf of the Qualifying Body.

Local bodies including (Lead Local Flood Authority, County Highways, County Ecologist, County Archaeology) were also consulted during this period, along with Tewkesbury Borough Council officers, in order to provide the basis for the draft screening opinion.

The advice received has been summarised below:

Historic England

No comments made.

Environment Agency

Thank you for your email relating to SEA Screening of the Deerhurst Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Planning Section of the NPPG (paragraph 073) states that:
A neighbourhood plan may require a strategic environmental assessment if the draft neighbourhood plan falls within the scope of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. This may be the case if it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. This may be the case, for example, where a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development.

Previous guidance indicated that:

A strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development

- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

We would only make substantive further comments on the plan if the NDP were seeking to allocate sites in flood zone 3 and 2 (the latter being used as the 1% climate change extent), or if there were another significant environmental concern relating to matters within our remit (such as an allocation in Source Protection Zone 1).

Natural England

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that:

- significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,
- significant effects on Habitats sites, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.

The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the Planning Practice Guidance. This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA. Further information is included in Natural England's standing advice on protected species.

Habitats sites are those referred to in the National Planning Policy Framework (Annex 2 - glossary) as "any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites".

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant an SEA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission standing advice.

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a SEA is necessary.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology

This draft of the neighbourhood plan under consultation suggests that the proposals are unlikely to have any negative impact on archaeological cultural heritage. It may have some positive impact, however, that is hard to assess in advance of the preparation of Appendix B on local heritage assets.

Gloucestershire County Council Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)

The LLFA considers that the draft Deerhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan will not have a significant environmental effect and that SEA is not therefore required.

Gloucestershire County Council Climate Change

The draft neighbourhood plan lists many positive actions towards tackling climate change. Proposals regarding improving bus services, pedestrian and cycle infrastructure are especially supported as mobility by personal cars is a significant contributor of carbon emissions within the county. With regards to building design and carbon emissions, further consideration to the measures laid out below, would be beneficial to explore:

- Orientation of building (and windows) to maximise solar gain in winter, and cooling in summer
- Placement of trees and other vegetation within development to maximise cooling in summer, and light in winter
- Securing cycle storage within developments
- Rainwater collection and harvesting

The provision of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points with development is encouraged. Officers suggest considering the current Building Regulations “Approved Document S: Infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles” as the minimum requirement, but not necessarily the optimum. This is because, for certain situations, it allows options that may not see sufficient EV charging point installations within new developments. As a result, this may limit the potential for EV uptake.

Thus, where applicable, it may be worth exploring how more EV charging points can be delivered, over and above the requirements of the Approved Document S.

On Design Guideline 11 regarding construction waste, the consideration of Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) and Materials Life Cycle Assessments on construction materials would be beneficial to see.

Regarding reference to cycle parking facilities in the draft Deerhurst Neighbourhood Plan (Policy DNP15): it would be preferable to ensure these are secure cycle storage facilities. Unsafe storage facilities is a barrier to encouraging cycles as a mode of travel.

Gloucestershire County Council Ecology

Although GCC is a partner for the emerging Cheltenham Borough, Gloucester City and Tewkesbury Borough Strategic & Local Plan it is not the adopting Local Planning Authority for this or the adopted Joint Core Strategy to which this draft neighbourhood plan relates. The county ecologist deals with matters of the county council. Thus, regarding the ecology matters of SEA and HRA screening statement, GCC officers suggest approaching the respective ecologists at Tewkesbury Borough Council and at Natural England.

Gloucestershire County Council Education

GCC officers have no further comments to make.

Gloucestershire County Council Libraries

GCC officers have no further comments to make.

Gloucestershire County Council Minerals and Waste Planning

GCC officers have no further comments to make.

Gloucestershire County Council Transport Planning

The SEA statement could look at options in more detail if the draft neighbourhood plan can set some more defined parameters for travel.

For instance, connections to the National Cycle Network running along Ham Road would benefit the community. The Countywide Cycle Infrastructure Plan (www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/lcwip) identifies A38 as a key corridor for cycling. This route would provide access to a bus corridor as well as allow people to cycle to Tewkesbury and Gloucester.

In addition, it would help to understand people's travel preferences and the current state of active travel infrastructure to plan for future improvements. For instance,

- What local facilities are people accessing?
- Can people walk and cycle to the local school?

Identifying the places people want to get to will help any future developers understand exactly what infrastructure is required.

Another course of action could be to offer protected space to cyclists and pedestrians from motor traffic along some routes (see Local Transport Note 1/20 on Cycle Infrastructure Design). Where there is more than one route available into a town or a settlement, perhaps one route can be reserved for all traffic, while another becomes a protected "quiet way" enabling people to travel without conflict with other forms of motorised traffic.

Tewkesbury Borough Council *Development Management Section*

No comments made.

Tewkesbury Borough Council Conservation Officer

No comments made.

Tewkesbury Borough Council Legal Team (One Legal)

I have considered the Deerhurst NDP rule 14 version and the screening report which has been prepared by Planning Policy officers. The Report meets the criteria specified within the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and I agree with the outcome that the Deerhurst NDP does not require an SEA.

From my perspective I am happy to confirm that the screening report and conclusion are compliant with the regulations.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

The purpose of Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of plans is to ensure that the protection of the integrity of European sites is part of the planning process. The requirement for HRA of plans or projects is outlined within the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitats Regulations).

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

SACs are areas which have been given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive. They provide increased protection to a variety of wild animals, plants and habitats and are a vital part of global efforts to conserve the world's biodiversity.

In Gloucestershire there are 7 SACs:

1. Rodborough Common.
2. Dixon Wood.
3. The Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites.
4. The River Wye.
5. The Wye Valley Woodlands.
6. The Severn Estuary.
7. Cotswold Beechwoods.

Special Protection Areas (SPA)

SPAs are areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the 'Birds Directive 1979' which provides enhanced protection given by the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status all SPAs also hold.

In Gloucestershire there are 2 SPAs:

1. Walmore Common.
2. The Severn Estuary.

The nearest European designated sites to the Deerhurst NDP area are Dixon Wood, the Cotswolds Beechwoods and the Severn Estuary SPA/SAC. These sites are outside the designated Neighbourhood Area.

Tewkesbury Borough Council Ecology Consultant (SEA and HRA comments)

Reading through the initial analysis, draft screening opinion and their plan proposals, I also concur with Natural England's advice that significant effects on statutory designated nature

conservations sites are unlikely and significant effects on Habitat sites, either alone or in combination are unlikely.

The inclusions of promoting darker sites and a focus on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is welcomed. The plan proposals may need to be updated to reflect the updated LNRS following the consultation responses.

Therefore, it is considered that SEA/HRA is not required for the draft NDP.

Conclusion

Following consideration of the information received, **the determination has been made that by virtue of the nature of the type and scope of policies and proposals contained in the draft Deerhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan, it does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.**

Effects on European sites have been screened out by virtue of the nature of the type and scope of policies and proposals contained in the draft NDP. **It is therefore concluded that Habitats Regulations Assessment is not required.**

Copies of the final determination, together with the reasons for the determination, will be circulated to the statutory consultation bodies in line with the regulations.

Date: 24 September 2025